A

LETTER

TO THE

TREASURER OF THE SOCIETY

INSTITUTED

FOR THE PURPOSE OF EFFECTING

THE

Abolition of the Slave Trade.

FROM

The Rev. ROBERT BOUCHER NICKOLLS,
DEAN OF MIDDLEHAM.

A NEW EDITION WITH ADDITIONS.

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LONDON, No. 18, Old Jewry, Oct. 30, 1787.

At a Committee of the Society inſtituted for the purpoſe of effecting the Abolition of the Slave-Trade.

A letter from the Rev. Robert Boucher Nickolls, Dean of Middleham, addreſſed to the Treaſurer, having been read,

RESOLVED,

That the thanks of this Committee be given to the Rev. Robert Boucher Nickolls, Dean of Middleham, for his intereſting letter of the 19th inſt. and for the offer of his ſervices: And this Committee being ſenſible of the advantage that may accrue to the cauſe of humanity by the publication of the ſaid letter, the Chairman is requeſted to ſolicit the Dean of Middleham's leave to circulate the ſame in print.

GRANVILLE SHARP, Chairman.

ADVERTISEMENT.

A Second impreſſion of the following letter having been deſired, I think it neceſſary to ſay ſomething of the firſt. It was originally deſigned to *ſuggeſt* topics of *inquiry* to ſome gentlemen on the ſubject. That it might *ſuggeſt* the ſame to the public was the reaſon it was printed by particular deſire of the Committee of the Society to whom it was addreſſed. It was by no means deſigned as a ſyſtem of evidence, as appears from the words of the letter itſelf, referring the Society to *better* information than I was able to give after an abſence of almoſt 18 years from the Weſt Indies, and where my laſt reſidence had been only for the ſhort ſpace of two years. My neareſt connexions alſo leaving it ſoon after, and a variety of events in America drawing off my attention, my correſpondence with the Weſt Indies was interrupted; but not from any want of regard to ſeveral moſt worthy and reſpectable characters there: men whoſe virtues and underſtanding effect all that in ſuch a ſtate of things can be effected, the preſent comfort and well-being of their ſeveral dependants.

But the impreſſion made on my mind at that time by the ſyſtem of ſlavery, has remained ſtrong ever

ever ſince. An amendment of that ſyſtem I have often wiſhed for, but never expected to ſee attempted; ſuch was the force of prejudice, and intereſt ill underſtood, which I ſaw ready to encounter every effort of that kind. Some hope was however kindled, when I obſerved in the public prints an advertiſement from the Society in London, to whom the following letter is addreſſed. With the ardour of a renewed affection, I inſtantaneouſly communicated the little that hung looſely and unconnected in my memory, and almoſt worn out; wiſhing them, as I had no other documents than my recollection afforded, to aſcertain from proper authorities, the ſuggeſtions I offered: though were there not a *ſingle fact* that could be adduced reſpecting the mal-treatment of *many* of our fellow-creatures in the Iſlands, yet *in this Country*, while its laws and liberties remain (and I pray with Paul Sarpi "eſto perpetua"), *the principle* upon which the abolition of the Slave Trade muſt be founded, namely, that no body of men hath any right for the purpoſes of intereſt and convenience to captivate, or enſlave, or oppreſs any other; this principle, I ſay, *will* and *muſt* remain alſo.

Since the publication of the letter, I have alſo myſelf endeavoured to obtain all poſſible information upon the ſubject of it. But remote from the ſeat

of intelligence, and little connected with thoſe who are beſt able to afford it, I could not procure the ſatisfaction I wiſhed —*all* that I have obtained accompanies this ſecond impreſſion. *Vid. Appendix.*

I muſt here correct a miſtake, tho' not at all affecting the fact alleged, reſpecting Macmahon: a miſtake which might eaſily happen to any one who has not carried an almanack in his head for twenty years. Macmahon died, not 18, but, four or five and twenty years ago; and the funeral I was preſent at was indeed at the eſtate which *was his*, where, at the time, I heard the fact alleged; but it was at the funeral of his heir (whether immediate in ſucceſſion or not I cannot tell), Mrs. Thornhill, who bequeathed the eſtate to her ſecond huſband General Thornhill, to the prejudice of her family; which introduced a diſcourſe of the many hands the eſtate had paſſed through, and none long poſſeſſed it; and ſome remarked that there was a divine viſitation in it, for the rightful heir before Macmahon and his mother Lady Savage, was a youth who was ſuddenly miſſing, nobody knew how, but whoſe ſkeleton was afterwards ſuppoſed to be found plaſtered up in a wall of that houſe; and, to carry on the ſequel of crimes, Macmahon's character was mentioned, though that was not the firſt of my hearing of it. But this,

to

to the beſt of my recollection, was the occaſion of my confounding in my memory the two funerals.

Of the humanity of Dr. Mapp I was aſſured upon a viſit to his ſon ſoon after his return from college, upon my obſerving an uncommon number of young negroes playing before his windows: and the flouriſhing ſtate of his fortune was communicated to me by Mr. Chriſtopher Moe, a gentleman of known probity, who was left, I believe, executor or guardian, or both. The overplus of £.12000 was either laid out on an additional eſtate, or in the funds—but I think I have heard that both an additional eſtate was purchaſed, and that money alſo was laid up in the funds—I know not any ſuch exaction as requires one to remember every particular of another's private fortune. Sufficient it is that humanity increaſed his ſtock, and that he died poſſeſſed of the fruits of it.

Another fact upon which I have founded an argument, is the number of blacks in Lord Clarendon's time in the iſland of Barbadoes, with which I have compared the ſuppoſed importations ſince. Not having Lord Clarendon's hiſtory by me, I could not conſult it to ſee if my citation was exact. I have ſeen no library but my own hereabouts, and that is a *portable* one. The book I read nearly twelve years ago to amuſe the ſad hours of war, in a military expedition, and not to lay up notes for

unforeſeen contingencies. As to the importations ſince his time I ſtated them as I had variouſly heard, alleging that I had not the means of aſcertaining them exactly, and therefore wiſhed them to be inquired into. A friend who reſided near 30 years in the Weſt Indies, and from whom I received ſeveral articles of information, contained in this impreſſion, ſays, they are ſtated too high, though he could not give me a preciſe ſtatement. But I ſuppoſe if *one ſhip*, according to his information, had upwards of nine hundred on board, the average of importation will be at leaſt a thouſand yearly—and that would give a hundred thouſand loſt in a hundred years—not to reckon the original decreaſe from 100,000 to 90,000 a proportion which would certainly depopulate the globe in a century.

My friend informs me that ſome Negroes (he does not ſay how many) have of late years been taken to the new-ceded iſlands; and ſome others have been taken off by their owners to avoid legal claims. To enlarge the number of the latter is not for the credit of the iſland; and ſuppoſe ten thouſand to have been carried to the other iſlands, the number diminiſhed ſince Lord Clarendon's time—the argument yet ſtands upon the ſame ground.

It is acknowledged there is ſtill a continued importation; for the future prevention of it is oppoſed

—Now

—Now that importation *muſt* have been conſiderable within the laſt forty or fifty years at fartheſt—for old Hamlet Fairchild was reckoned to have thrown away a fortune by not accepting Guinea conſignments, becauſe he ſaid "he would not deal in "blood;" and Wood and Symonds (much within that period) having received thoſe conſignments, made, it is well known, a very conſiderable fortune by them.

Now either the importation is conſiderable, or it is inconſiderable: if it is *conſiderable*, my *premiſes* are good; ſcil. that there is a great waſte of the ſpecies—if it is *inconſiderable*, my *concluſion* is good; ſcil. that it ought to be aboliſhed: for, if *inconſiderable*, the benefit of importation is *inconſiderable*; and it ought to be aboliſhed as doing little good, as productive of much evil, as preventing alſo much good by the natural increaſe, and other means ſtated in the letter.

"In the year 1768 by a ſtatement of the Abbé "Raynal (Hiſt. In. Book II. cited by Thomas "Cooper, Eſq. in his excellent Letters on Sla-"very) there were 104,000 Negroes exported out "of Africa: the *Engliſh exported for their iſlands* "53,100; their coloniſts on the North continent "carried away 6300;—the French 23,500;—the "Dutch 11,300;—the Portugueze 8,700;—the "Danes

"Danes 1200." This account alſo tallies with the concluſion deducible from the following fact, publiſhed by authority (in France). In 96 years, ending 1774, 800,000 Slaves had been imported into the *French part of* St. Domingo, of which there remained only 290,000 in 1774. Of this *laſt* number only 140,000 were Creoles, or natives of the iſland—i. e. of 650,000 Slaves the whole poſterity was 140,000. Conſiderations ſur la Colonie, &c. Cooper.—The average annual conſumption therefore (he proves) of imported ſlaves to be 100,000, which are ſo *many* reaſons againſt the ſlave trade.

I have heard it however alleged, and indeed ſeen ſomething like it in print; that in all this we do a great deal of good to the Negroes, for we thus prevent their deſtroying each other at home; but I am apt to believe, if, in the time of our civil wars at home, the French or Dutch had come with ſuch-like mood and figure upon this country, they would have been anſwered with ſwords and bullets: and whoever ſays they ought not, in that caſe, to have been ſo anſwered, deſerves to have ſuch logic applied to himſelf.

If the 50,000 annually imported into our iſlands be divided among them in a ratio proportionate to their reſpective extent or population, a pretty good eſtimate

eſtimate may be formed of the annual conſumption of each.

In a word; if the ſlave trade be conſiſtent with the moral law or with the goſpel, purſue it—if not, give it up, or call not yourſelves moraliſts or chriſtians.

I have ſet down nought in malice; for I am ſcarcely enough acquainted with any one intereſted in this buſineſs to have reſentments againſt any. Oblituſque meorum, obliviſcendus et illis*. Among the very few Weſt India gentlemen to whom I am known, I am perſuaded there is great worth and humanity; one gentleman in particular, of large fortune, had very ſerious thoughts of liberating his own ſlaves; till it was repreſented to him, that under the preſent ſyſtem of the iſlands, through his humane care it might be as well for them as for himſelf to remain as they were. But, *magis amica veritas:* oppreſſion of every ſpecies—*my heart deteſts it as the gates of hell.* And the goſpel I preach teaches me to promote the general intereſts of MAN, but eſpecially his moral intereſts; of whatever nation, complexion, religion, or government he be.

I may be ſuppoſed to have written with ſome feeling and ſincerity upon this ſubject, when I declare

* *The world forgetting, by the world forgot.*

clare that *the man* whom of all others upon earth I moſt loved and honoured, who was of the ſtricteſt virtue and the warmeſt benevolence, in the moſt ſolemn hour of life ſaid he had nothing in his retroſpect of life to regret, but that he had been ever connected with a ſyſtem of ſlavery, which was injurious to the moral ſentiments of the maſter, and the perſon of the ſlave—yet may my laſt end be like his !

Middleham,

Middleham, Yorkſhire, Oct. 19, 1787.

SIR,

I Take the liberty of troubling you in conſequence of an advertiſement I have juſt ſeen in the York paper, by which I find ſeveral humane gentlemen, to their infinite honour, have notified their deſign to move in Parliament for the abolition of the ſlave trade. Being myſelf a native of the Weſt-Indies, though eſtabliſhed in this country, I feel myſelf intereſted in the cauſe you have nobly eſpouſed, and wiſh to contribute my mite of information, to which your public invitation encourages me.

I conceive, Sir, if it can be proved that the natural increaſe of the negroes already in the iſlands would be fully adequate to the cultivation of them, and that ſuch natural increaſe would be ſecured by humane treatment, no argument could then be brought againſt the abolition of this accurſed traffic, but from the private intereſt of a few individuals, on this ſide of the Atlantic chiefly.

Though it muſt be from a number of facts that the above poſition can derive incontrovertible evidence, yet I will ſtate one or two remarkable ones, referring

referring you to perſons in London to authenticate them in a better manner than I am able to do.

About ſeventeen or eighteen years ago, a Mr. Macmahon died upon his eſtate in the pariſh of St. George in the iſland of Barbadoes. The eſtate was valued, as well as I can remember, at about 30,000 *l.* that money. Its late poſſeſſor had been in poſſeſſion of it ſeven or eight years; but finding it incumbered with a debt to a merchant in London, he reſolved to pay off this incumbrance by extraordinary exertions: in conſequence of which, he deſtroyed the health and lives of many of his negroes *. He was therefore obliged to ſupply their place with others purchaſed from time to time during the ſpace of ſeven years; till at length, upon his own demiſe, his eſtate was left preciſely in the ſame ſtate of incumbrance he found it; the money loſt by the death of his ſlaves being found equal to the original debt upon his eſtate.

* Since writing the above, a gentleman of the Iſland has aſſured me it was aſcertained from a negro-levy (or poll-tax) that in two years the number of Macmahon's ſlaves was leſſened nearly one half. *i. e.* from 170 to 95, by his ſeverity: and that it was his uſual boaſt he did not deſire a newly purchaſed ſlave to live longer than four years, in which time he could be ſufficiently repaid for the purchaſe. The ſame gentleman aſſures me that his own negroes doubled their number in eighteen years. I have aſked and hope to obtain his leave to mention his name, when the Society apply to Parliament.

Nearly

Nearly about the ſame time, or a little before, died Dr. Mapp of the ſame iſland, a gentleman who poſſeſſed an eſtate of leſs value than that above mentioned, being (as I believe) but about the value of 20,000 *l.* currency; in a ſoil leſs rich, and at a greater diſtance from market. This gentleman was rather the patriarch than the maſter among his negroes. Of proviſions they had a plentiful ſupply; his tenderneſs gave them a long reſpite from labour during the heat of the day, from eleven to three, and proper refreſhments were added in the ſultry interval without any labour of their own. Thus foſtered by a fatherly care, their increaſe was wonderful. Another eſtate, on which there were no negroes, was purchaſed, in order to receive the overflow from the original one; which purchaſed eſtate was, I believe, of the value of 12,000 *l.* currency. The daughter of this gentleman had a ſuitable portion, and the ſon inherited a clear fortune of above 40,000 *l:* more than double the original property. The daughter is married to a moſt reſpectable gentleman, of good fortune, H. A. Eſq.* who will, I dare ſay, being a perſon of great humanity, certify you further on a ſubject that does ſo much honour to the memory of his lady's excellent father; for it is of importance to

* The gentleman here referred to has been waited on by the Treaſurer of the Society, and has confirmed the account.

aſcertain

aſcertain theſe particulars with minute exactneſs. I preſume the well-known houſe of L—— can authenticate the former relation, if it be as I heard it in the iſland, at the funeral of that inhuman perſon Macmahon. Having now no connexion with the Weſt-Indies, and reſiding at a diſtance from town, my communications to you can be of little more ſervice than pointing out the quarter from whence you may derive better information: yet I have not knowingly exaggerated any thing, or miſinformed you intentionally.

It is very certain that negroes multiply in warm climates in an infinitely greater proportion than in cold. Even extreme heat does not incommode them: nor are they ſo liable as the white people to the diſorders of warm climates, when their blood is not impoveriſhed by extreme labour, ſcanty or unwholeſome diet. In the Weſt India iſlands, and in the ſouthern colonies of North America, they will be full of health and vigour at thoſe ſeaſons, when the whites are affected with fevers and agues, and have ſwollen legs and jaundiced faces. But if the blacks are diſeaſed with ſlow fevers and dyſenteries, is there any wonder in it, when we conſider that milk and freſh meat they never taſte? Their food conſiſts of maize, vegetables, and either a little rancid ſalt fiſh, or (rarely) a ſmall portion of ſalt beef or pork from

Ireland,

Ireland, that is of the worſt quality the market affords; and their drink is, *commonly*, water from ponds, *occaſionally* with a little rum in it; and in the rainy ſeaſons they are not always withdrawn from their labours to ſhelter.

In the northern provinces of North America, (where alſo I have reſided), from the ſeverity of the climate, the increaſe of the blacks is ſmall (indeed there are few of them), their natural complexion of gloſſy black is changed to a dark unhealthy tawney, and they are ſoon old; yet they keep up their numbers without foreign acceſſion. But warm climates are congenial to them; in them with tolerable treatment they are prolific and long-lived. It muſt therefore be the ill treatment they receive in the iſlands that renders yearly ſupplies of new ſlaves neceſſary to keep up the number on the plantations: where, when they arrive, many from the loſs of their liberty, their friends and country, pine to death; ſome deſtroy themſelves; few, if any, are capable of much labour till the ſecond or third year. And it is a known fact, that when the planters find new recruits requiſite for the cultivation of their eſtates, they not only prefer native ſlaves, but will give a conſiderably greater price for them.

Why then, it may be ſaid, is any planter ſo blind to his own intereſt, as not to treat his ſlaves in a

manner that would amply repay his humane attention? Some perſons do, and find their account in it. Still this practice is not general: far from it. The planter has paſſions upon which there is no check in law in favour of the negroe, for whoſe murder (if the property is veſted in him) he is not accountable to the magiſtrate. The planter from extravagancies in this country, from riotous living in his own, and not unfrequently from bad crops, is often deeply embarraſſed with debts to the Britiſh merchant; or, eager to make a fortune,* he truſts more to preſent exactions of labour and parſimonious ſavings, than to the future product of humanity, or future recompence of liberality. I ſpeak generally: I know there are amiable exceptions; but exceptions imply a rule to the contrary. And laſtly, the planter confirmed in habit, inflexible in obſtinacy, and rooted in prejudice, is unwilling to try the effect of a lenient and novel ſyſtem; from which, to ſay the truth, the vices of his ſlaves (what can be expected from ſlaves?) render him often averſe.

* It is evident the greater the quantity of land allotted to the ſugar cane, the leſs will be left for the cultivation of corn and roots for food; and therefore upon the failure of foreign ſupplies, the plantations muſt be, as they often are, diſtreſſed for proviſions for the blacks.

With

With reſpect to the force of prejudice in our iſlands, we know how invincibly unwilling the white people are to admit the ſlaves to the privileges of Chriſtianity; to which I believe the venerable Society for propagating the goſpel in foreign parts can give ample teſtimony. And why, upon the foot of humanity I aſk the queſtion, are theſe poor people to be excluded from thoſe comforts of our religion, which its founder commanded to be tendered equally unto all? They are under no incapacity which they do not owe to us. At *New-York* I have ſeen from twenty to forty black communicants. The people in our *iſlands* not only *neglect**, but *object* to the converſion of their ſlaves, upon pleas, which, if admitted originally, would have annihilated Chriſtianity at its firſt appearance.

* This is ſaid generally, without deſign to include in the cenſure thoſe particular worthies who are ſincere in the cauſe of religion and humanity: I wiſh their number and influence was greater. Since the above letter was written, I have been well informed that a young clergyman of large property in the iſland of Barbadoes, the Rev. Mr. Holder, has regularly inſtructed and baptized above ſixty of his Negroes. I have reaſon to mention this with pleaſure; he was once my pupil; and upon his going from hence, in orders, my entreaties did but meet his own earneſt inclination to promote the cauſe of Chriſtianity where he was going. But I take no praiſe from principles of which I found him poſſeſſed.

In the continuation of Lord Clarendon's hiſtory, we find that, in his time, the number of white inhabitants was 50,000; and of blacks, if I rightly recollect, 100,000 in the iſland of Barbadoes: about twenty-five years ſince, the numbers by actual enumeration, were of whites leſs than 25,000; of negroes 90,000. Now, though the number of whites has apparently diminiſhed in a greater proportion than that of the blacks, yet it is to be obſerved, that the blacks are ſtationary; they do not migrate; the whites do: nor is the increaſe of the whites from new comers in a greater proportion than the number of natives that migrate or live elſewhere: beſides that the climate is more in favour of the blacks than of the whites. It is now, in round numbers, a hundred years ſince Lord Clarendon wrote his continuation. In this ſpace of time the whites have diminiſhed about one half; the number of blacks have leſſened in the proportion of nine to ten, notwithſtanding the yearly importation of 5000, as I have heard: but ſtating it only at 4000, or even 3000, that would prove the original ſtock of blacks to have been loſt juſt ſo many times over, *i. e.* five, four, or three, in the ſpace of a century, beſides the diminution from 100,000 to 90,000; ſo that while the whites, in a climate leſs favourable to them, have loſt only one half of their original ſtock, the blacks

blacks have loſt it four or five times over. How near all theſe particulars are to the preciſe fact I have not the means of aſcertaining; but in a general view, I believe they are ſufficiently near to ſhew that the blacks in our iſlands are diminiſhed, through mal-treatment, in a proportion, which were it to prevail equally in all countries, in a century would depopulate the globe. But I think it would be worth while to examine accurately into theſe particulars, as an average calculation of the loſs humanity ſuſtains in our iſlands, would be an argument that *no man* with the feelings of *a man* could have the face to reply to. I think too the amount of the annual import of ſlaves into our iſlands might be eaſily aſcertained here at home, from the accounts of ſales; that amount might be compared with the exports of produce from the iſlands; and the compariſon would ſhew how much of his produce the planter loſes, and the proportionate charge upon it, which the conſumer pays, for a traffic that a little time and ſome humanity would render uſeleſs.

The immediate and effectual remedy for the diminution of ſlaves in the iſlands, would be the *entire abolition of the ſlave-trade*. This would neceſſarily oblige the planter to ſuch care of his negroes, as would at once eſſentially ſerve the cauſe of humanity, without giving him any occaſion for the

plea that his rights are infringed, or his property invaded: for ſurely, however he may have acquired a property of the ſlaves now under his dominion, he can have none in thoſe who are not: he can have no greater right to recruit his gang with the inhabitants of Guinea, than with the inhabitants of Britain. Nor can the Britiſh merchant be better intitled to buy or ſell the inhabitants of Guinea, than the inhabitants of Guinea are to buy or ſell him. Let him ſuppoſe himſelf at Algiers, and aſk himſelf what he would think of his chains, or of the right that impoſed them? What *if it were true*, that the Britiſh merchant buys only the captives taken in war; war is made in Guinea that the captives may be ſold to him? It is the receiver of ſtolen goods that makes the thief.

For all the blood ſpilt in ſuch wars, for all the villages ſet in flames by the contending parties, for all the ravages incident to war, for all the tears and ſufferings of captives whoſe attachments are violently broken, for all the cruelties they endure in the courſe of their voyage, or under a rigid taſk-maſter when ſold for ſlaves, the merchant is to anſwer. He ſets up ſelf-intereſt as his idol, and ſtabs humanity as the ſacrifice to it. And ſhall the reſt of the world ſit down quietly, and ſuffer their common

mon humanity to be thus injured and inſulted, that the trader may eat turtle, and the daughter of the ſkipper of a veſſel flounce in ſilks or muſlins?

But it is a branch of national commerce, and is allowed by the legiſlature. So, anciently, among the ſtates of Greece was piracy not only allowed, but eſteemed honourable. But in a matter ſo evidently contrary to every principle of common juſtice, where is the man, with ſhame in his face, or honeſty in his heart, that in a national aſſembly will *dare* avow ſuch a cauſe? "Public and national injuſtice," ſays Polybius, "differs only from "private theft and robbery in being more deſtructive." If we admit the plea, *from neceſſity*, for ſuch a traffic, where ſhall we ſtop? Is not the plea of the robber who is hanged, as good? *Fiat juſtitia, ruat cælum.* The friends of liberty muſt, upon their own principles, reprobate this worſt ſpecies of tyranny: the *worſt*, becauſe no other has ſo blaſting an effect on morals, no other ſo thoroughly vitiates the heart. The Chriſtian cannot countenance it; his Bible ſhews him, that "men-ſtealers" are claſſed with "murderers of fathers and mothers, and perjured perſons," 1 Tim. chap. i. ver. 10. And will he mix in ſuch a crew? Will he give them his influence and ſupport? They who read and believe their Bible, may learn from

the hiſtories and prophecies it contains, that though Divine Providence is pleaſed to permit one nation to oppreſs another, and though the oppreſſing power be the ſcourge of Divine Juſtice, yet vengeance will revert to the oppreſſor at laſt, becauſe he ſeeks the injury, not the reformation, of the oppreſſed. And therefore believers in a Divine Providence will ſee much to dread in the encouragement of the ſlave-trade. "He that leadeth into captivity ſhall "go into captivity; he that taketh the ſword ſhall "periſh by the ſword." Rev. xiii. 10. "By "the death of Theſſalonica and her ſons," ſays a learned hiſtorian, "the whole royal family of Philip "king of Macedon was totally extirpated; as that "of Alexander had been before in the death of his "two ſons, Ægus and Hercules. *And ſo theſe "two kings that had made ſo many tragedies in other "princes families, had them all at length by the juſt "ordination of Providence*, brought home to their "own; both Philip and Alexander, and all that were*

* Horace, an author whom none will accuſe of ſuperſtition, carries the matter ſtill higher, referring the civil wars of his day to the murder of Remus as their judicial cauſe:

Sic eſt: acerba fata Romanos agunt,
Sceluſque fraternæ necis;
Ut immerentis fluxit in terram *Remi,*
Sacer nepotibus cruor. EPOD.

"*deſcended*

" *deſcended of them, dying violent deaths.*" Prideaux Connex. vol. II. p. 808. But obſerve the reverſe of the medal: The heir of Perſia kneeling by his dying father Darius Nothus, inquires earneſtly, " By what arts did you reign ſo happily for yourſelf " and people?" " By doing in all things," anſwered the dying prince, " that which was juſt both " towards God and towards man." Ib. p. 614.

Could that infernal traffic in human blood be annihilated, the condition of ſlavery in the iſlands would be meliorated; the native negroes would be more tractable, more readily acquire the regard of thoſe among whom they were born; and be more eaſily converted to Chriſtianity, becauſe they might be more eaſily informed. At length, by the mild and uniform operation of Chriſtian principles, ſlavery itſelf might be aboliſhed. For though Chriſtianity at its firſt promulgation, for obvious reaſons, did not affect to introduce any alteration in the civil rights of men, yet its genuine tendency is friendly to civil liberty, as Monteſquieu has obſerved in its favour, and Gibbon has dared to allege in its reproach. That *ſlavery* is not at all neceſſary to the cultivation of the ſugar-cane, is evident; for Sicily, within a few centuries, manufactured ſugar, as Cochin China* now

* The governor of the French iſlands Mauritius and Bourbon, about twenty years ago, in his account of a voyage to Cochin China,

now does, without any aſſiſtance from ſlaves. But were it otherwiſe, what would, what ſhould, be the choice of Britons; to have ſugar in their tea, or to ſet nations free from the ſcourge, the chain, and the yoke?

To the planter, the prohibition of the ſlave-trade would be immediately beneficial, and the benefit would be progreſſive with time, as it would immediately raiſe the value of his negroes, whoſe numbers alſo would be increaſed by a melioration of the ſyſtem of ſlavery:

To the Britiſh merchant it would be equally beneficial, in a ſimilar manner; for none of the produce of the iſlands being expended in the purchaſe of ſlaves, more would be left for the payment of debts to Britain:

To the Britiſh nation it would be beneficial, becauſe the planter, cultivating the ſugar-cane at leſs expence, could afford his produce at a lower rate; becauſe, alſo, ſeamen and ſoldiers would not be ſent to periſh* in the unhealthy climates of Africa:

China, aſſerts, if I rightly recollect (it being long ſince I have ſeen the book) that the quantity produced or exported was 40,000 Hogſheads yearly; double the produce of the iſland of Barbadoes in a moderately good year, with 90,000 ſlaves.

* Among other cauſes of loſs of health one is remarkable;—the Guinea worm, which at firſt, as a ſmall inſect, perforates the

To the American States it would afford a proof, that we are no leſs friendly to liberty than they, who have already ſhewn to us an example, in this reſpect, which we ought firſt to have given:

To the moraliſt and philanthropiſt it would afford matter of juſt and happy triumph, by extending and ſupporting the influence of their principles in the province of politics; where they have hitherto for the moſt part reſembled the condition of Virgil's mariners,

——— "Rari nantes in gurgite vaſto:"

To all the world it will prove our equity and humanity, and produce a confidence in the national virtue, which would be felt in peace and in war, in our funds, our commerce, our treaties:

To government it will ſecure the affectionate and zealous ſervice of thoſe who at all conjunctures, are its beſt, though not its clamorous friends, the

the ſole of the foot; then becoming a worm, extremely fine, but of great length, works its way up to the knee, and deſtroys the limb, unleſs extracted; and to extract it is a work of difficulty the ſubtilty of its poiſon, if broken in the operation, occaſions the loſs of the limb or lameneſs. I have ſeen ſeamen begging in the Weſt Indies, who have been diſcharged from their ſhips on this account.

intelligent

intelligent and virtuous, who for their numbers and weight are too reſpectable to be ſlighted:

To nations yet unborn it will tranſmit liberty and happineſs:

To the reign of George the Third it will give peculiar luſtre, and exhibit him as the friend of mankind at large, whom the nobleſt zeal in the ſupport of piety and morals at home diſtinguiſhes as the real father of his people!

I have not, Sir, intentionally miſ-ſtated any circumſtance, and I am out of the way of more correct information. What I have written is dictated by an ardent wiſh for the ſucceſs of your cauſe.

I have ſome pamphlets which have been publiſhed upon this ſubject, and will circulate them among my neighbours.

I am, SIR,

With great reſpect,

Your moſt obedient

Humble Servant,

ROBERT BOUCHER NICKOLLS,

DEAN of MIDDLEHAM.

Samuel Hoare, Jun. Eſq.

Lombard-ſtreet, London.

P. S. " Your

POSTSCRIPT.

Your letter, Sir, of the 27th December, has ſuggeſted ſome further reflections:

To the general intereſts of human nature, and in the annals of mankind, the abolition of the ſlave trade, upon principle, would prove a *new* and *important* æra. For I believe it may be remarked with truth, and, if true, moſt worthy of notice, that no human government (if we except what little has been done on this head in America) has ever yet authoritatively declared by a public act, "that no "part, party or body of men hath any right to op- "preſs, captivate, or wage war upon any other, for "any of the purpoſes of dominion or intereſt, pub- "lic or private." It is a principle for which the world is indebted to revealed religion, which alone declares the equal origin, and regards, as equal, the natural rights of all. The Greek and Roman patriots reſpected no liberties, no rights but their own—if they were aſſailed, the bull of Phalaris could not bellow louder. The reſt of the world, foreigners and barbarians, (who were all but themſelves) they conſidered as fair game and lawful plunder. "Si tribuendum eſt jus ſuum cuique," ſaid

ſaid the Roman orator, "redeundum ad caſas:" even our own boaſted Magna Charta had only the freedom of the higher orders for its object; being reſtricted in its principle by the diſtinction it makes, "nullus *liber* homo capiatur," &c. Let this principle then (readily, I grant, admitted in diſcourſe,) be but fairly adopted in every national code, and regularly applied and appealed to, and there is an end of oppreſſion and ſlaughter:—And what nation ſo worthy of leading the way, or on whom will the expectation of the world ſo much turn as the moſt enlightened upon earth? The law of gravitation conſerves all things in their place and order, from the duſt of the balance to the planetary orbs and diſtant worlds; and this principle, if permitted to operate, would equally preſerve the nations of the earth in perfect harmony. It would, to give a ſingle inſtance from paſt events, have preſerved to Spain peopled provinces, but ill exchanged for gold: It would have kept her hands pure from Peruvian blood, which yet cries againſt her to Heaven, and will be heard.

The giving an authoritative ſanction to this traffic, or its abolition, by the legiſlature, will, under either event, eſtabliſh a principle in its conſequences diffuſive and perpetual. The national character will either be exalted on the one hand by the

the virtues of juſtice and generoſity pervading the maſs of ſubjects; or, on the other, degraded and debaſed in its principles and ſentiments by the decree; "*that violence and injuſtice may allowably be exerted* "*towards helpleſs nations, for the purpoſes of intereſt* "*and convenience.*" And how ſuch a principle, under ſuch high ſanction, will operate throughout all the ſmaller ramifications of ſociety; how bad men will be brought to obſerve the diſtinction, *that only ſalt water can then make*, between Africans abroad, and fit objects of plunder at home, the authors of ſuch a decree, ſhould it ever be made, muſt determine. They muſt take on themſelves to call its conſequences, moral, political, and judicial, with reſpect to Divine Providence. Cæſar, an atheiſt, ſtarted from ſleep when dreaming of his murdered million. And what anodyne ſhall, *at a certain hour*, compoſe a mind corroded with the ſenſe of having rendered irremediable the miſery, and of having ſanctioned the murder, of many millions!

For the ſucceſs of your endeavours, Sir, I entertain the moſt ſanguine hopes, not only from the ſpirit of the Nation in general, but from the liberal and noble principles of the higher orders in it; and, with the *higheſt* of all, the charities that bleſs human life, and adorn human nature, are inmates.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

The Writer of the following Letter (given in his own Words) reſided upwards of Twenty Years in the Weſt Indies.

Extract of a Letter to the DEAN OF MIDDLEHAM.

ACCORDING to the beſt of my remembrance the following eſtates for about 20 years, whilſt under the management of *humane and merciful men*, kept up their ſtock of Negroes by the natural increaſe:—Sir William Fitzherbert's eſtate in St. Andrews, during the life of Mr. Rolſtone his manager;—three eſtates of the late Colonel Newton in Chriſt's Church and St. James's;—the eſtates of the late Mr. Haggat in St. George's and St. Peters;—the eſtate of Mr. Graves in St. Lucy's;—the eſtate of the Hon. William Biſhop in St. Lucy's;—the eſtate of Colonel Maynard in St. Michael's;—an eſtate of Sir Philip Gibbes, whilſt under his own direction;—the eſtate of Mrs. Ferchuſon in St. Peter's;—the eſtates of the late Thomas Alleyne, Eſq. during the life of Mr. Rolſtone;—the eſtate of Mrs.

Mrs. Street during the life of Mr. Johnſtone.—Theſe are all that I can at preſent recollect. Why the natural increaſe of the Negroes is not general, is owing I am convinced to the following cauſes:

1ſt. Planting too large a number of acres under canes by a third, or at leaſt a fourth, which obliges them to have too few acres under proviſions, and thoſe in general much neglected. In conſequence of which the poor Negroes are cruelly oppreſſed, and half ſtarved.

2d. Placing cruel and unfeeling managers on the eſtates, under whoſe direction an increaſe of Negroes is not more to be expected, than an increaſe from a flock of ſheep if a wolf were the ſhepherd.

3d. Making the Negroes perform all the labour (comparatively ſpeaking) with very little aſſiſtance from cattle and horſes, and no aſſiſtance at all from implements of huſbandry, ſuch as hoe ploughs, nidgets, &c. which might be rendered very uſeful in weeding the grounds after the hard ſurface had been broken up. But ſo obſtinately do they perſiſt in their old habit and cuſtom of making their Negroes do every thing, that they treated a worthy and humane clergyman as a whimſical and fooliſh man, who introduced them on his eſtate, though they ſaw how greatly his Negroes were relieved by it. You may aſk, and with reaſon, as a man of feeling and humanity,

manity, why ſugar canes are made the *firſt*, and proviſions (on which the very exiſtence and ſupport of the poor Negroes depend) the *laſt and leaſt* conſideration, eſpecially when the labour required to plant one acre of canes, will at leaſt plant *ten* of corn?—I anſwer, becauſe on making great crops of ſugar (and not on the preſervation of the Negroes, by a plentiful ſupply of proviſions) depends the fame, and too often the continuance in office of the manager. This is the true cauſe of all the oppreſſion to the poor Negroes. Several large eſtates that I know, from having been managed upon that cruel and impolitic plan (impolitic even with regard to this life) have loſt the greateſt part of their Negroes. If therefore the ſlave trade were aboliſhed, they could then have no hope of recruiting their gang but by the natural increaſe of the Negroes, which would moſt effectually preclude all ſuch cruel conduct, and compel thoſe to be humane from intereſt, who are not ſo upon principle.

FINIS.

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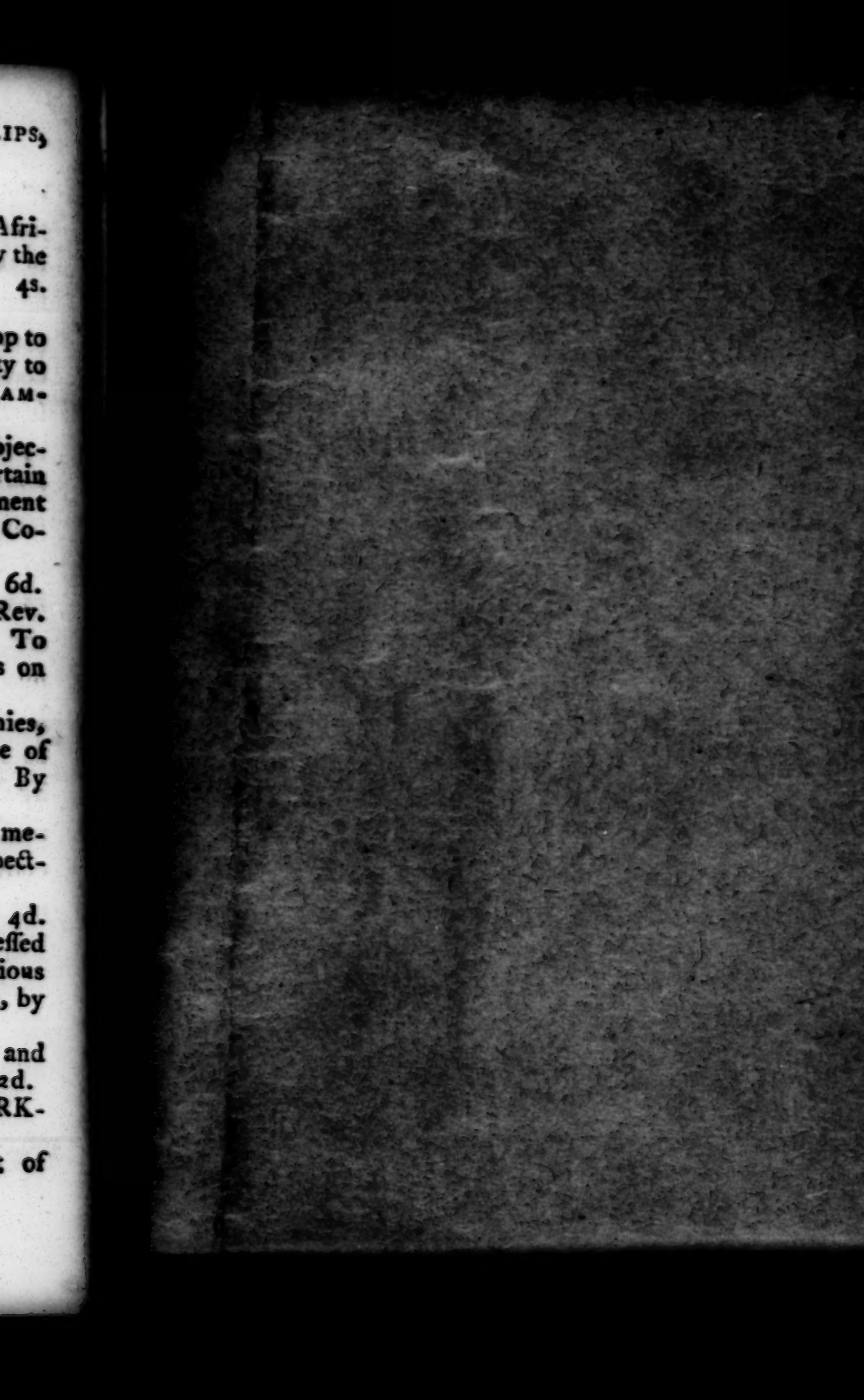
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